

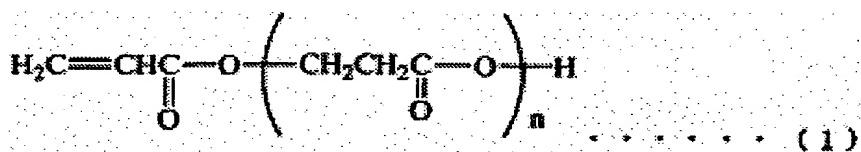
CLAIMS

1. A water-soluble thickener comprising a water-soluble copolymer having a weight-average molecular weight of 6,000,000 or higher obtainable by polymerizing a monomer mixture which comprises 2-acrylamido-2-methylpropanesulfonic acid and/or a salt thereof and acrylic acid and/or a salt thereof as essential components and optionally other copolymerizable monomer components,

wherein 2-acrylamido-2-methylpropanesulfonic acid and/or a salt thereof represents 20 mol% or more of all the monomers.

2. The water-soluble thickener according to claim 1,
wherein the monomer mixture comprises 20 to 60 mol% of 2-acrylamido-2-methylpropanesulfonic acid and/or a salt thereof, 80 to 20 mol% of acrylic acid and/or a salt thereof, and optionally 0 to 20 mol% of the other copolymerizable monomers.

3. The water-soluble thickener according to claim 1 or 2,
wherein the monomer mixture comprises a compound represented by the following formula (1):



(wherein n is an integer of 1 to 12)

and/or a salt thereof as the other copolymerizable monomer components.

4. A liquid acidic detergent consisting of an aqueous solution which comprises a mineral acid and/or an organic acid and the water-soluble thickener according to any one of claims 1 to 3.

5. A liquid acidic detergent consisting of an aqueous solution which comprises 3 to 30% by weight of a mineral acid and/or an organic acid and 0.02 to 5% by weight of the water-soluble thickener according to any one of claims 1 to 3.

6. A thickening method comprising the step of adding the following water soluble copolymer to an acidic aqueous solution or an acidic emulsion:

a water-soluble copolymer having a weight-average molecular weight of 6,000,000 or higher obtainable by polymerizing a monomer mixture which comprises 2-acrylamido-2-methylpropanesulfonic acid and/or a salt thereof and acrylic acid and/or a salt thereof as essential components and optionally other copolymerizable monomer components,

wherein 2-acrylamido-2-methylpropanesulfonic acid and/or a salt thereof represents 20 mol% or more of all the monomers.